

REMARKS

The Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider the pending rejections. For the rejections, the Applicants provided the following arguments for distinguishing the cited prior art reference without any amendment to the pending claims. The Applicants have added new claims without introducing new matter. Furthermore, the Applicants have voluntarily amended the specification to correct some informalities.

Section 102 Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 1 through 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Nguyen. The Examiner stated without specific reference to the claim language that Figures 1 and 2 of the Nguyen reference teaches every step of independent claims 1, 2 and 5. The Examiner's characterization of the pending claims appears to be improper for the following specific claim language.

Independent claim 1 explicitly recites "monitoring the optical signals at the output port connected to the selected monitor circuit to generate a feedback signal. . . ." Similarly, independent claim 2 explicitly recites "monitoring the optical signals at the output port connected to the selected output signal monitoring unit to generate a feedback signal. . . ." Lastly, independent claim 5 explicitly recites "monitoring the optical signals at an output port connected to the selected output signal monitoring unit to generate a feedback signal. . . ." As explicitly recited above, the optical signals are monitored "at the output port," and the output port is a part of "the switching unit." For example, the monitor circuit 107-1 through 107-N are located at the output ports 105-O1 through 105-ON as explicitly recited in the above independent claims.

In sharp contrast to the above explicit recitations in the independent claims, the Nguyen reference discloses with respect to FIGURES 1 and 2 that the monitoring unit or the detectors 45 and 47 are located within the amplifier 20. In other words, the monitors 45 and 47 are located in front of a plurality of optical paths 22, and the monitors 45 and

47 measure the optical signals that have not gone through a selected one of the optical paths 22. In view of the above distinction, the Applicants respectfully submit to the Examiner to reconsider the current rejections.

Furthermore, independent claim 1 explicitly recites “amplifying the optical signals by the selected optical amplifier based upon the feedback signal.” Similarly, independent claims 2 and 5 explicitly each recite “amplifying the optical signals by the selected input signal adjusting unit based upon the feedback signal.” As explicitly recited above, the optical signals are amplified by “the selected optical amplifier” or “the selected input signal adjusting unit” based upon “the feedback signal.” For example, one amplifier or input signal adjusting unit is selected from the amplifiers 104-1 through 104-N as explicitly recited in the above independent claims.

Again, in sharp contrast to the above explicit recitations in the independent claims, the Nguyen reference discloses with respect to FIGURES 1 and 2 that the amplifier adjusts an optical signal to a desired level by selecting a laser source. In other words, the Nguyen reference fails to disclose the adjustment by selecting a single amplifier from a predetermined set of the amplifiers.

In view of the above distinctions, the Applicants respectfully submit to the Examiner to withdraw the currently pending section 102 rejections.

Newly Added Claims

The Applicants have added claims 8 through 14 to the current application in the current response. These claims are added without introducing new matter, and they have been supported by the original disclosures of the current application. The Applicants respectfully submit that the newly added claims should be entered.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request a favorable Office Action so indicating.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken I. Yoshida', is written over a horizontal line.

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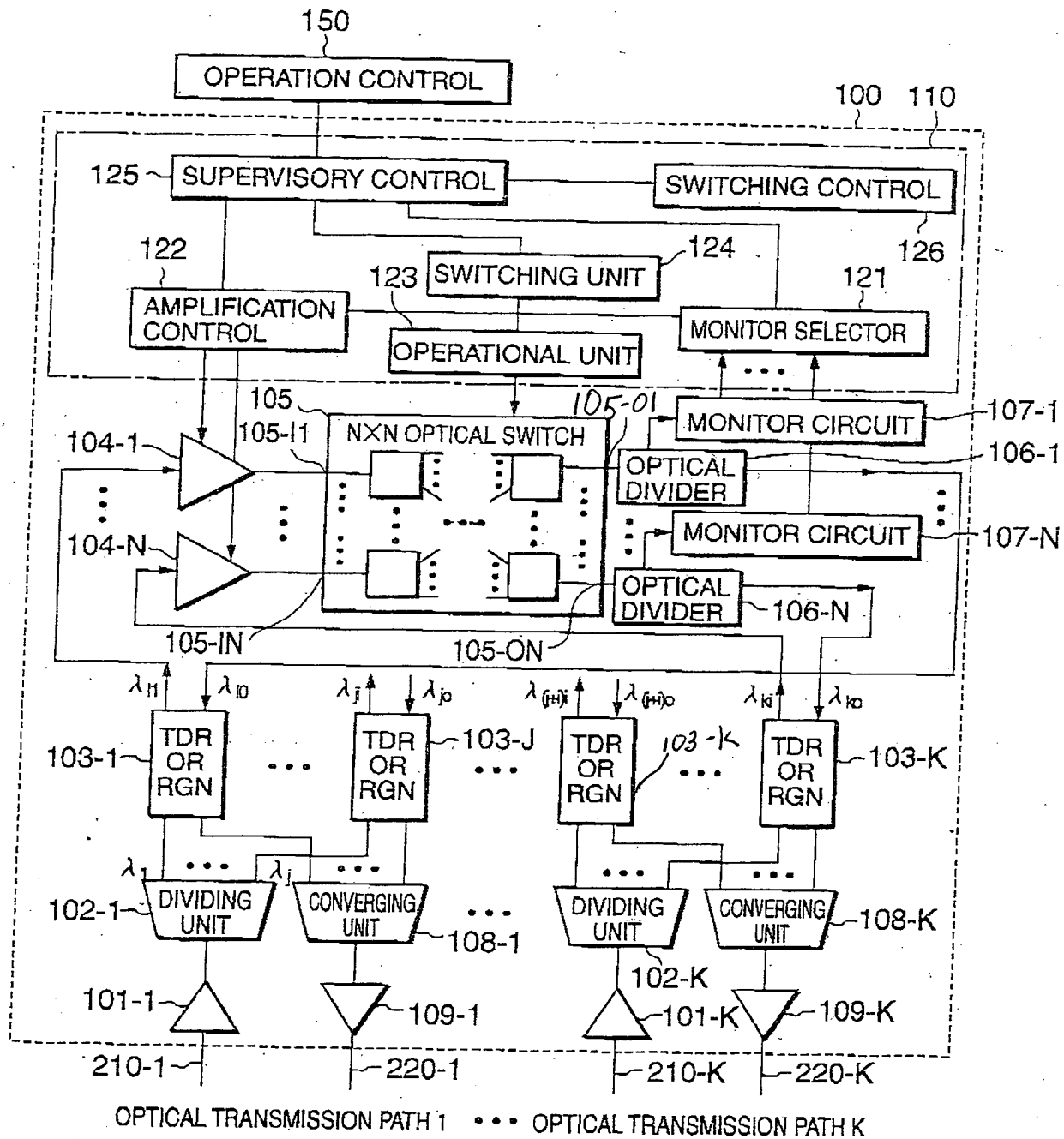


FIG.2